

N^o 12

The Authority of Christian Princes, and of Bishops
and Pastors, in Ecclesiastical Matters, not incon-
sistent with the true Nature of Christ's Kingdom.

A
S E R M O N
P R E A C H E D at
Banbury, June 16. 1717.
On JOHN xviii. 36.

Occasioned by a
S E R M O N
Lately published by
The Lord Bishop of Bangor
On the same Subject.

By BENJAMIN LOVELING, M. A.
Vicar of BANBURY in Oxfordshire.

The Bishop.

Will you be ready with all faithful Diligence to
banish and drive away all erroneous and strange Do-
ctrines, contrary to God's Word?

Answer.

I will, the Lord being my Helper.

The Form of ordering of Priests.

L O N D O N :

Printed for HENRY CLEMENTS, at the *Half-Moon* in
St. Paul's Church-yard. 1717.

The History of Captain Maturin
and his Adventures in the Mediterranean Sea
and the Indian Ocean.

A

И О М Я З

на сказки

САМЫЙ ПОДРОБНЫЙ

Сборник изображающий

всю красоту

И О М Я З

и наилучшую

подборку изображающую

все виды спорта

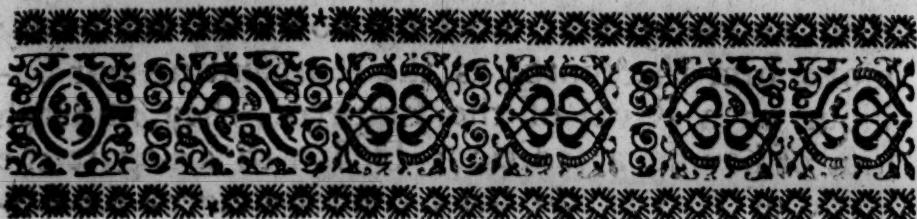


ПЕРВЫЙ В СВЕТЛЕЙШЕЙ

ИЗДАНИЕ В ОГРОМНОМ

СВОЮ ПРЕДСТАВЛЯЕТ ВЪ ДИЛИГЕНТНОСТИ

СОВЪЮЗЪ АНГЛІИ И ФРАНЦІИ



JOHN xviii. 36.

Jesus answered; My Kingdom is not of this World.—

OUR Saviour intending to erect the Christian Dispensation upon the Ruins of the Mosaick, did thereby inflame the Jews with such an implacable Degree of Envy and Jealousy, that they left no probable Design unattempted in order to perplex him with Difficulties and Disappointment. And being themselves a conquered People, subject to the Government of the *Romans*, to awaken the Caution of the Civil Magistrate, we find them in this Chapter not only apprehending the Saviour of Mankind, and bringing him before *Caiaphas* their High-Priest, as a Capital Criminal, but appealing from him to the Procurator of *Judea*, intreating *Pilate* to pronounce on him the ignominious and formidable Sentence of Crucifixion. Whether the more than common Character of our Saviour's Innocence and Piety, or the surprizing Report of his Miracles, had made Impressions on *Pilate* no way agreeable to the Barbarity of Christ's Accusers; so it was, that the Procurator, tho' naturally too much addicted to Acts of Inhumanity, discovered no small Inclination to release and preserve him. This put the Jews upon concerting the most politick

Measures to engage the *Roman Governor* to give ear to their Accusations, and to condemn Christ. And knowing that nothing could so effectually move him thereunto, as the representing our Saviour as a Rival of the Emperor, they impeach him of having a seditious Design to arrogate the Title of *King of the Jews*. A Stratagem so cunningly adapted to the Circumstances and Station of *Pontius Pilate*, that for the Sake of his own Interest and Preservation, the honourable Dictates of Justice and Compassion gave way to Resolutions of Partiality; and in compliance with the Revenge and Cruelty of Christ's Accusers, *Pilate* enters into the Judgment-Hall, and demands of him, whether he would acknowledge himself to be the King of the *Jews*? which Charge our blessed Saviour was so far from owning in his Sense, that he absolutely renounces all Claims of that kind, in these express Terms: *My Kingdom is not of this World.*

That we may rightly understand the meaning of these Words, which have of late been perverted to a wrong and dangerous Sense, we are to observe, that the *Jews* misconstruing the ancient Prophecies in relation to the *Messiah*, expected a Saviour that would take off from their Necks the *Roman Yoke*; and make them a flourishing, independent Kingdom under himself, their temporal, successful Prince. This was the Foundation of that ignorant and aspiring Request of the Mother of *Zebedee's Children*: *Grant, Lord, that these my two Sons may sit, the one on thy Right Hand, and the other on thy Left in thy Kingdom.* Whereby she evidently desires, that he would be pleased to confer on them the most honourable Posts in his Civil Government. Nay, his Disciples in general expected his Temporal Reign with that restless Impatience, that they were for taking him by Force to make him a King. And after his Crucifixion

fixion and Resurrection, we find even his Apostles themselves, immediately before his Ascension, putting this Question to him : *Lord wilt thou at this time restore again the Kingdom to Israel?* From which Passages we have reason to believe, that the Jews thought they had reason to expect Christ came to take on him the pompous Character of a victorious earthly Monarch, on purpose to re-instate them in their wonted Grandeur and Immunities. When therefore Pilate asked our Saviour if he was the King of the Jews, his Meaning by that Question, must be, whether he came, according to the Expectation of that People, as a Temporal Prince to assert their ancient Privileges and Liberties. Whence we may fully apprehend what our Saviour meant, when he answers, *My Kingdom is not of this World.* He assures the Roman Governour that the Accusation against him was without Ground ; that Tiberius had no Cause to be afraid of his Pretensions, his Kingdom being not of a Civil or Secular Nature, whereby any Prejudice might accrue to the Roman Empire.

From which Answer it may be justly concluded, that our Saviour, having a *Kingdom*, was consequently a King; but that his Kingdom being *not of this World*, his Regal Power did no way interfere with, and so could be no real Diminution to any earthly Jurisdiction whatsoever: By which Means the holy Jesus at once asserts what belong'd to *Cæsar*, and what belong'd to God; and did likewise render the Accusation of his Enemies remarkable only for its Malice and Falshood.

In speaking to the Text, I propose to do these Three Things.

First, I shall shew, what is here meant by the Kingdom of Christ.

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z dly, Why this Kingdom of his is said not to be of this World.

z dly, That tho' his Kingdom be not of this World, it does not therefore follow, that he has not appointed and authorized some Persons in this World to maintain Order, and to support Government in his Kingdom.

First I am to shew, what is here meant by the Kingdom of Christ.

The Kingdom of Christ will admit a twofold Acceptation; sometimes 'tis used in holy Scripture to signify a Future State of Happiness. In which Sense it is not only called the Kingdom of Heaven, but a Kingdom of Glory, all the happy Subjects appertaining thereto, being actually glorified by the Son of God. Those that belong to this invisible Kingdom, are called Members of the Church Triumphant. But the Scripture affords us another Notion of the Kingdom of Christ, which has also the Character of a Kingdom of Heaven, consisting only of those Subjects that belong to his Church Militant here on Earth, stiled the Kingdom of Grace, and differing in Point of Dispensation, from that other more exalted Empire, his Kingdom of Glory.

His Kingdom in the former Acceptation is so far from being of this World, that it does not so much as exist in this World; since we must of Necessity first go out of the present World, before we can be capable of being Subjects thereof; whilst we are Subjects of his Kingdom of Grace, we are but Candidates for, not Partakers of his Kingdom of Glory.

Indeed no Body can be so ignorant, as to imagine, that that Kingdom of Christ can be of this World,

World, when it has no other Existence, but in a Future State. And therefore we are in this Place to consider the Church as Militant, not Triumphant ; and the Kingdom of Christ, as a Kingdom not of Glory, but of Grace ; which by Prejudice and Misinterpretation of the Divine Promises and Predictions, was generally expected to have been like all earthly Kingdoms, of a Temporal or Secular Complection. But tho' in several Respects it differs very much from the Kingdoms of this World, it nevertheless agrees so much with them, as not only to lay Claim to the Name, but also to partake of the Nature of a Kingdom.

For in the first Place, it consists of Officers, as well Superiour and Subordinate, as Supreme ; and of others likewise of an Inferiour Rank, and more private Character. All Christians without Distinction, are in the Language of the New Testament, denominated *Saints* ; and Christ the Head of his Church, is stiled in the same Volume of God's Book, *the King of Saints* ; the more effectually to convince us, that the whole Body of Christian Believers are his Subjects ; and that his Church is truly his own Kingdom. When *Pilate* put this Question to him, *Art thou a King then?* Our Saviour was so far from disowning, that he asserted his Title to that Supreme Character, declaring withal, that the Execution thereof, was the main Design of his Incarnation and Nativity. *Thou sayest that I am a King: To this End was I born, and for this Cause came I into the World.* Which indeed was no more than what the Angel *Gabriel* assured the blessed Virgin he should certainly be, in this plain Prophecy. *The Lord shall give unto him the Throne of his Father David; and he shall reign over the House of Jacob for ever, and of his Kingdom there shall be no end.* And then as to the Subordination of Officers in this his spiritual Kingdom, he has

taken

taken due Care to appoint them their several Powers and Stations, having set some in the Church, First, Apostles, Secondarily, Prophets, Thirdly, Teachers, for the perfecting of the Saints, for the edifying of the Body of Christ. He has also Instituted a suitable Ordinance, that of Baptism, by which Men have the inestimable Privilege of spiritual Naturalization, who were before Aliens from the Common-Wealth of the Israel of God. This initiatory Institution being designed to secure our Allegiance to Christ, and to discourage us from all Acts of Rebellion against him, to the Prejudice of his Authority, is therefore very properly called a Vow, whereby we recognize our Saviour's Supremacy, by a solemn Renunciation of his Rival the Devil, and by taking a Promissory Oath of Submission to his holy Will and Commandments. He has moreover, as a mighty Prince, undertaken to preserve and defend his Kingdom the Church, in all Ages of the World, insomuch that *the Gates of Hell shall never prevail against it*: To which Purpose he furnishes all his Subjects with suitable and necessary Accoutrements, with the *Shield of Faith, the Sword of the Spirit, the Helmet of Salvation, the Belt of Truth, and the Breast-plate of Righteousness*, whereby they may at once *resist their Adversary the Devil*, and make him *fly from them*. And farther to signifie his undoubted Right to their sincere Obedience, he has enacted Laws, and commissioned *Heralds* to proclaim, as well as *Ambassadors* to recommend and inforce them, in all Parts of his Dominions, for the better Conduct of all his Christian Subjects, decreeing Punishments upon the Violation, as well as Rewards upon the Observance of such his Sacred Edicts. Thus has Christ not only the Name, but the real Office and Jurisdiction of a King, which he actually executes with that Regularity and Exactness, that his Church may truly deserve the Appellation

pellation of his Kingdom. We may now perceive that by his Kingdom is here understood nothing else but his Church on Earth, planted by his Omnipotence, protected by his Providence, govern'd by his Authority, and guided by his Wisdom.

Let us then proceed to examine *idly*, Why this Kingdom of Christ, which is the Christian Church, is here asserted by Christ himself not to be of this World.

I shall not in this Place concern my self with his universal Supremacy as God, whereby he is *King of Kings*, and the greatest, the most absolute Monarch has the Title only of his Representative or Vicegerent. Neither shall I consider his particular Relation, as being the Son of *David*, to the Civil Government of the *Jews*, by which he might be truly, not in derision called, *the King of that People*. But I shall treat of his *Mediatorial Character*, as he is both God and Man, and our most compassionate Redeemer. In which Capacity it will evidently appear, that his *Kingdom is not of this World*, from the following Reasons and Considerations.

First, because the Kingdom or Church of Christ was not to overturn, nor interfere with any earthly Powers. The Christian Religion was designed to make no manner of pernicious Alteration in Civil Affairs. It has no hand in deposing Princes, nor in stirring up Subjects to resist, or rebel against them. No, it teaches them not only to be subject, but to be so upon a steady Foundation of Piety and Duty, to be *subject not only for Wrath, but for Conscience sake*. The unbelieving Servant, when he imbraces the Gospel, is to be a Servant still, *subject to his Master with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward*. Children, when baptized, are solemnly obliged to obey their earthly Parents, as well as their Father which is

in Heaven, and to relieve them in Distress, notwithstanding the Pretence of a religious Vow to the contrary. In short, Christianity leaves Men, in respect of all Temporal Stations, as it finds 'em, and all it does is to instill those Principles of Conscience into 'em, which may incline 'em to discharge their several Duties with the utmost sincerity and Application. The Jews indeed of *Thessalonica* had the Presumption to charge St. Paul and the first Christians, with the Guilt of turning the *World upside-down*; but their Accusation, if it had any Force at all, extended only to the Alteration of Men's ill Morals, not of their civil Polity or Constitution. They endeavoured to dethrone the Usurpations of Vice and Infidelity, but not lawful Princes; and the only Vassalage they would have freed Subjects and Servants from, was that of Sin and Satan. By which Means they intended to have turned the *wicked World upside down*, but not any settied Order of temporal Government, whether Political or Oeconomical. We grant that Christianity overturn'd the Polity of the Jews; but that was because their Dispensation was only Temporary. *The Scepter being to depart from Judah, and a Lawgiver from between his Feet*, when *Shiloh came*, no Marvel, if at the *rising* of that *Sun of Righteousness*, the Shadows of the Ceremonial and Judicial Law vanished and disappeared. We likewise acknowledge, what our Saviour himself tells us, that *he came to set a Man at variance against his Father, and the Daughter against her Mother*; but yet these unnatural Differences were not the Design of his coming; nor were they in the least promoted either by the Religion he taught, or by the Example he gave the World; they being only the indirect Result of what he said and did, occasioned by Men's wrong Prejudices, and egregious abuse

abuse of the peaceable Truths which he delivered. His Kingdom therefore is so far from being of this World, that it does not intrench upon the Rights of Secular Princes, nor does it cancel any one natural or civil Obligation owing from Inferiors to those about them.

Besides, the Laws by which the Kingdom of Christ is to be governed, are not of an Human, but a Divine Extract; in which respect it may also be affirmed, that his Kingdom is not of this, but of the other World. The Laws of Civil Governments have their Rise only from the Councils and Consultations of Men. They are the result of Experience and Observation, and many times of actual Inconveniences and Grievances, and not seldom of false Prospects of remedying them; which necessarily renders 'em of a precarious Continuance. Depending upon variable Circumstances, and future unforeseen Contingencies, they are consequently liable to various Alterations, and seeming, if not real Amendments. But the Laws of Christ's Kingdom have a Divine Original. *Flesh and Blood did not reveal them, but our Father which is in Heaven.* The Objects proposed to the assent of Christians, are so truly Mysterious and Incomprehensible, that they could never have entered into the Thoughts of Men, without Divine Inspiration. The Sacramental Ordinances of Christianity depend purely upon the Authority and Institution of our blessed Redeemer. And Morality could not have shined with that unusual Lustre and Perfection, had not his sacred Pencil effectually given it the finishing Stroke. The Laws of his Kingdom are a noble Pandect, as durable even as his Kingdom it self; like those of the *Medes and Persians*, they alter not, and for a much better reason, viz. The Legislators Infallibility and infinite

Wisdom. The Kingdom therefore of our blessed Saviour, may be truly said not to be of this World, when those peculiar Laws, whereon it is founded, and whereby it is governed and supported, are in regard to their Original, not of this World.

But we will take another View of the Laws of Christ's Kingdom, and observe not their Original, but their main Design and Tendency; from which Prospect it will yet farther appear, that his Kingdom is a truly Spiritual, not a Civil Constitution. The Design of erecting temporal Jurisdictions is, to serve secular Ends and Purposes, to secure Life, and Liberty, and Property; that Industry might find proper Encouragement, and Peace be maintained by an impartial Administration of Justice, which requires the different Stations of Civil Superiors and Inferiors, that there may be reasonable Commands on the one hand, and on the other regular Compliance. Now all this may be transacted and discharged upon a mere Principle of Honour and worldly Interest, out of regard only to Self-Preservation and publick Prosperity, with a wise Intention to make the present Life happier and more desirable. But the Laws of Christ's Kingdom are designed to promote our heavenly and spiritual Concerns: To make us sound Members of his Mystical Body, that Grace may be communicated from him our Head, to the Nourishment of our needy Souls, to induce us to speak and think, no less than act upon truly Christian Principles; and to be more influenced by the Love and Fear of God, than either by the Hopes of everlasting Happiness, or by the Terrors of never ceasing Misery. These are Convictions so evidently different from worldly Ends and Considerations, that in times of Persecution they teach us even to slight all secular Advantages and Satisfactions. And whenever our earthly

earthly stands in Competition with our spiritual and eternal Interest, we are to obey the Laws of Christ's Kingdom, rather than those of Civil Powers, *not fearing them that kill the Body, but him that can cast both Body and Soul into Hell.* And tho' it must be granted that the Laws of Christ's Kingdom apparently tend to the Prosperity, and Happiness even of those Kingdoms that are of this World; it must however be affirmed, that they were not reveal'd chiefly or principally for any such secular Designs.

This Point will still appear more evident, if it be considered, that the Kingdom of our blessed Saviour is not to be enlarged by Military Force or Conquests. Temporal Princes very often lay the Foundation of their respective Dominions on their fortunate Hostilities and Triumphs. They measure the Bounds and Extent of their Jurisdictions with the Point of their Swords, and according to the various Successes of their Arms, are either absolute or limited. But the Kingdom of Christ was erected, and is always to be maintained, by the quite contrary Measures of Meekness and Submission, Poverty of Spirit, Self-denial, and Love and good Will even to Enemies. A War purely for the Support or Enlargement of his Kingdom, tho' by a mistaken Zeal it may be called *Holy*, cannot possibly be vindicated by any Law of his Enacting. If his Kingdom had been of this World, his Servants would then have fought by his Commission, *that he should not be delivered unto the Jews:* but his Kingdom being not from hence, he sharply reproves the unbecoming warmth of St. Peter, in cutting off Malchus's Ear in Defence of him, tho' his injured Lord, and charges that forward Disciple to *put up his Sword into the Sheath.* Accordingly the Blood of the Primitive Christians became afterwards the Seed

Seed of the Christian Church, not slied by Insur-
rection, but by the Faith of Martyrs. The usur-
ped Dominion of the Impostor Mahomet, may in-
deed be upheld and extended, like too many King-
doms of this World, by successful Violence, and
prosperous Injuries: but the Kingdom of the holy
Jesu\$, has not better Support than the Patience,
and Purity, and Perseverance of its Subjects, in
conformity not only to his Doctrine, but Exam-
ple, under the happy Influence, and powerful Pro-
tection of himself their Head.

Nay, his Kingdom is capable of existing, as without the Assistance of, so in Opposition to, all earthly Powers whatsoever. During the long Interval of Infidelity, when Princes for the Three first Centuries, not only refused to imbrace, but frequently persecuted the Christian Religion, the Kingdom of Christ did then exist without any dependance upon, nay, generally speaking, in Opposition to the Civil Government. That Society ordained Bishops and Pastors, preached the Gospel, administered the holy Sacraments; Excommunicated the Scandalous; Absolved the Penitent; and in short, maintain'd the Dignity of Christ's Kingdom, with most invincible Resolution, and the strictest Regularity, whilst supream, as well as subordinate Magistrates, whose Provinces they inhabited, neglected no Artifices either of Subtilty or Cruelty, to seduce and extirpate them. Those Sheep, the first Christians, were by the good Providence of the great Shepherd, still a Flock, tho' in the midst of Wolves; and being within the Pale of the Sheepfold, the Church, were always esteem'd a distinct Society from them. As Subjects indeed, the Infidels and they belong'd to one and the same Civil Community; but as Disciples of Christ, they were Members of his Kingdom, which existing

existing independently upon, and perfectly in Contradiction to all earthly Powers, must consequently be concluded not to be of this World.

It may so happen, that Men may lose all their Interest in Temporal Kingdoms, purely by adhering to the Kingdom of Christ. And on the contrary, they may actually forfeit all their invaluable Privileges in Christ's Kingdom, by being too much immersed in the Affairs of Temporal Kingdoms, which could not possibly be true, if both these Kingdoms were of the same Kind.

If then this Kingdom of Christ was not to overturn any earthly Powers: If his Laws have not an Human, but a Divine Original: If they tend not so much to serve secular, as spiritual and heavenly Purposes: If his Kingdom is not to be enlarged by Military Force and Conquests: And if it be capable of existing, not only without the Assistance of, but in a direct Opposition to all Temporal Jurisdictions whatsoever; it may be taken for granted, that the Church of Christ, which is his Kingdom, is not a Temporal, but a Spiritual Empire.

But, notwithstanding all that has been said to distinguish the Kingdom of Christ from those of earthly Potentates, I shall endeavour to evince in the

Third and last Place, that tho' his Kingdom be not of this World, he has nevertheless appointed and authorised some Persons in this World, to maintain Order, and to support Government in his Kingdom.

The Kingdom, or Church of Christ, being evidently a Society existing in the World, it must therefore so far agree with the necessary Frame of all other Societies, as to consist as well of Superiors as Inferiors; which makes it reasonable to conclude,

conclude, that there may be some to govern in this his spiritual Kingdom, without any Affront or real Prejudice to him who is the Head. Admitting our Saviour to be, as indeed he is, the *Supream Governour*; those however that bear Rule in his Kingdom, not in Opposition, but only in Subordination to, and by a delegated Power from him, can no more be said to interfere with, or diminish his Authority, than an inferiour Magistrate acting conformably to the Laws of the Realm, and thereby serving his King and Country, can be said to detract from the Prerogative of his Prince, or from the Power of the Legislature. Church Governors, as long as they keep within the safe Bounds of their several Commissions, do in the exercise of their respective Trusts, apparently represent their Lord and Saviour, transacting Matters of the highest Consequence in his Name, and for his Glory; for which they cannot justly be taxed either with Usurpation, or disrespect to his supream Jurisdiction. Our blessed Lord has, by his holy Apostle St. Paul, given an express Command, that private Christians should *obey those that have the Rule over them, who watch for their Souls, as they that must give an Account.* Now does not this evidently enough imply, that it is his Will, that all private Subjects of his Kingdom, should submit in all lawful Things to the Prudence of Ecclesiastical Authority; and that those of publick Character in the Church, if on all proper Occasions, they refuse to execute any Branches of their Function, are chargeable with guilty and punishable Omissions? But if it be a Crime in Pastors to order any lawful Thing, which they shall conceive expedient for the Church; how can it be thought Wisdom in the Head of that Church, to require the Members thereof to obey their Pastors in all Things lawful?

For

For to require Obedience when no Commands are to be given, no Acts of Authority exerted, is in plain Terms to require *Absurdities*. We must then either affirm, that our Saviour would have private Christians obey and submit to Ecclesiastical Goverhours, when such Goverhours must never command, nor punish them; which is extremely absurd: or we must be brought to acknowledge, that those Goverhours, who exert themselves in commanding private Christians, and punishing the Contumacious, are so far from acting to the Prejudice of Christ's Authority, that they support Order and Regularity in his Kingdom, and do consequently vindicate his Divine Honour and Wisdom, by rendering his own Laws a Reputation, not a *Reproach* to him.

There are several Rules and Directions in the New Testament, by which Ecclesiastical Persons are to proceed in order to the more effectual Regulation of Christ's Kingdom, and to the containing the several Subjects thereof, within the due Bounds of their respective Duties: All whicht would be unnecessary, if not *ridiculous*, if those Ecclesiastical Persons offended Christ, or usurped his Prerogative, only by endeavouring to follow such plain Rules and Directions.

The Power of inflicting Church Censures, and of absolving Penitents, which has of late been coarsly treated even by one who is himself authoriz'd to exert it, was no doubt, conferred in Effect upon all the Apostles, by this Commission given by our Lord himself to the Apostle St. Peter, *Matt. 16. I will give unto thee the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on Earth, shall be bound in Heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on Earth, shall be loosed in*

Heaven. Which we find afterwards in the 20th Chapter of St. John, conferred upon every individual Apostle, when Christ breathed on them, and said unto them, *Receive ye the Holy Ghost; whosoever Sins ye remit, they are remitted, and whosoever Sins ye retain, they are retained.* And to assure them of the Plenitude of their Authority, he says: *As my Father has sent me, even so send I you.* Now by the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven, is meant the Power of Administration of Church Affairs, and of opening and shutting the Door of Christ's Kingdom, as well for the Reception of the Reformed, as for the Exclusion of the Refractory. That it might not be objected, that this Power of the Keys is inconsistent with the Power that our Saviour has over his Kingdom, there is a visible Distinction betwixt the Power imparted to his Apostles, and that which he still keeps to himself. What he reserves to himself, is an independent Supremacy, an Original, and Universal Jurisdiction over his Church; upon which Account, he is in the Revelations characteriz'd the *Holy and True*, which *bath the Key of David*. Whereas the Power wherewith he hath invested the Apostles, is an Allusion to that subordinate Authority of *Eliakim the Son of Hilkiah*, who was to have on his Shoulder, the Key, not of *David*, but of the *House of David*. Now, as *Eliakim* was not to have *David's Key*, but only the Keys of his House, and had thereby a Power of governing his Family, without any Derogation from the suprem Power of King *David* himself: so may the Apostles, by Virtue of Christ's Commission, be said not to have his own Key, but the Keys of his heavenly Kingdom, which may be called his House or Family; and consequently acting

not

not in Opposition, but only subordinately to his Supremacy, they cannot be concluded to invade, or detract from, but to support, and carry on the Affairs of his spiritual Kingdom.

These Acts of spiritual Authority, which the Apostles were empowered by Christ to exercise, were pursuant to his own Delegation, strictly discharged by the Apostles on all suitable Occasions; and particularly by the Apostle St. Paul, who excommunicated the incestuous Corinthian in this solemn Form: *I verily, as absent in Body, but present in Spirit, have judged already, as tho' I were present, concerning him that hath so done this Deed. In the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my Spirit with the Power of our Lord Jesus Christ, to deliver such an one unto Satan, for the Destruction of the Flesh, that the Spirit may be saved in the Day of our Lord Jesus. And as this more than common Offender thus lay under the Apostle's Sentence of Excommunication; so when his Crime had been attended with requisite Contrition, the same Keys that before shut him out from Christ's Kingdom of Grace, were used by way of authoritative Absolution, to let him into it.* For in the Second Epistle to the Corinthians, he gives them to understand that he had remitted that Sin, which he had before retained, in these Words: *sufficient to such a Man is this Punishment which was inflicted of many: so that contrariwise ye ought rather to forgive him, and comfort him, least perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with over-much Sorrow. To whom ye forgive any thing, I forgive also: for if I forgave any thing, to whom I forgave it, for your Sakes forgave I it, in the Person of Christ.* So that, if we observe it, St. Paul, in these his Acts both of Excommunication and Absolu-

tion, derives his Power altogether from our Saviour Christ. For as he denounces Excommunication *in the Name of our Lord Jesus*: so does he afterwards pronounce Absolution *in the Person of Christ*. And how these Acts of Christian Discipline, that were executed in Christ's Name, and said to be done altogether by his Authority, and in Obedience to him, can be interpreted a Diminution to his Authority, as Head of his Kingdom the Church, I cannot understand.

Now it is to be supposed, that either St. Paul knew his own Power and Jurisdiction, or he did not. If he did not, it may be demanded, whether he was endued with the Holy Ghost, or not endued, when he excommunicated and absolved the incestuous *Corinthian*. If he was not endued with the Holy Ghost, nor assisted by him in that very important Act; how did our Saviour perform his own positive Promise of supplying the want of his own Presence, with the Mission of that blessed Spirit? But if St. Paul was at that time endued with the Ho'y Ghost, it may be farther demanded, how that Spirit of God, which was to teach the Apostles *all Things*, came so far to neglect the Design of his own Mission, as to suffer the Apostle St. Paul to invade the Jurisdiction of our blessed Lord himself, by exercising spiritual Authority in that Kingdom the Church, whereof he is the only Head and Prince? On the other hand, if St. Paul knew his own Power and Jurisdiction, it may be yet further argued, that he either acted according to his Knowledge, or in Contradiction thereto; if the latter, what an horrid Aspersion will this be upon the great Apostle of the *Gentiles*, who was *not a whit behind the very chiefeſt Apostles*? How justly will it call his Sincerity in Question, when

it is supposed that he acted in a Matter of that Consequence, in Opposition to the Dictates of his own Understanding, and the Suggestions of the Holy Spirit of God? But if it be said, that the Apostle proceeded in the spiritual Affairs of Excommunication and Absolution, according to his Knowledge, and the unerring Dictates of the Spirit of Truth; then we are under a Necessity of inferring, that he acted in these Matters within the Compass only of his own Authority; and that the exercise of Discipline in the Kingdom, or Church of Christ, is agreeable to the Mind of the Holy Ghost, who was sent by Christ to take special Care of his Church in his own Absence; and consequently, that such Acts of Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction may very well be discharged, without any Manner of Encroachment upon the supreme Authority of our blessed Saviour.

Thus far then we have proved, that St. *Paul*, when he excommunicated, and absolved Offenders, acted therein according to the Dictates of Knowledge and Sincerity. Let us see now, whether these Powers by him exercised, were designed by him to extend to others of the same Order with himself. My Meaning is, whether Bishops, who succeed the Apostles in Station, tho' not in Gifts, were design'd to execute the same Discipline in the Church, or Kingdom of Christ. Now we are assured even from the Sacred Canon of holy Scripture, that St. *Paul* enjoins *Timothy* (Bishop of *Ephesus*) to receive an *Accusation* even against an *Elder*, provided it be before two or three *Witnesses*. And if *Timothy* had Authority of receiving Accusations against them in a judicial Manner, he had most certainly Authority likewise to proceed judicially against them;

them ; otherwise his receiving Accusations in so formal a Method, would only appear to be a *solemn Insignificancy*. When the same Apostle had constituted *Titus* Bishop of *Crete*, he enjoins him to rebuke Criminals with all Authority, that is, with the Authority of a Person in his high Station. And that the Injunction related to Ecclesiastical Discipline, may be learnt from this express Direction to him : *To reject a Man that is an Heretick after the first and second Admonition*. The Import of which Direction may be understood from our Saviour's own Direction, in regard to the Process of an Excommunication, *Matt. 18.* which being extremely apposite, I shall here transcribe. *If thy Brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his Fault betwixt thee and him alone ; if he shall hear thee, thou hast gain'd thy Brother. But if he will not hear thee, take with thee one or two more, that in the Mouth of two or three Witnesses, every Word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the Church ; but if he neglect to hear the Church, let him be unto thee as an Heathen Man, and a Publican.* So that our Saviour here orders, that such an incorrigible Person should be rejected, or reduced even to the deplorable Condition of an Infidel, after the first and second Admonition, which you see was the very Substance of the Direction given by St. Paul to *Titus*, in regard to his Proceeding against obstinate Heretics.

Now if St. Paul was not very well satisfied from the Holy Spirit of God, wherewith he was inspired, that such Discipline was intended by Christ, to be continued in his Church, and that the exercise thereof was not inconsistent with his suprem Authority ; could it ever be imagined that he would have been so cruel an En-

emy

my to the Kingdom of Christ, as well as to the Souls of *Timothy* and *Titus*, as to excite them to the Execution of those Powers which they could not exert without, not only Arrogance, but Sacrilege? Would it have been agreeable to St. Paul's Holy Character, to pretend to communicate that Authority to those Bishops that he had himself consecrated, which could not possibly have been executed, without flying in the Face of Christ's own Authority?

The Angel, or Bishop of the Church of *Thyatira*, wanted neither Works, nor Charity, nor Faith, nor Patience, nor Perseverance, nor any Ornament belonging to a *private Christian*, that might render him acceptable to our blessed Saviour; yet being remiss in his *Episcopal Capacity*, permitting those to *Preach*, who were not evangelically *sent*, and to spread Errors tending, not to the Edification, but Seduction of Christians, he was for that only Reason, most deservedly reprimanded by the Son of God. The Passage at large is this: *Unto the Angel of the Church in Thyatira, write: These Things saith the Son of God; who hath his Eyes like unto a Flame of Fire, and his Feet are like fine Brass. I know thy Works and Charity, and Service and Faith, and thy Patience, and thy Works, and the last to be more than the first. Notwithstanding I have a few Things against thee, because thou suffereſt that Woman Jezebel, which calleth her ſelf a Prophetess, to teach, and to ſeduce my Servants to commit Fornication, and to eat things ſacrificed unto Idols.* Here we have an express Determination of the Point in Controversy, even by the Authority of Christ himself. He evidently acknowledges the Bishop of *Thyatira's* private Vertues and religious Improvements;

and

and could those alone have intirely recommended him to the Approbation of our Saviour, no manner of Blot would have stain'd his Character: But since he refused or neglected to exert his Episcopal Powers, in *suffering* Hereticks to sow the Seeds of their pernicious Tenets in the Field of the Church, he was, notwithstanding all his other spiritual Attainments, esteem'd unfaithful in his high Station. And can it be affirmed, without speaking against the Son of Man, that the Son of God himself, would have discommend-ed the Angel of the Church in *Thyatira*, for not exercising Ecclesiastical Discipline on this false Prophetess, if such Discipline had been any way incompatible with that supremam Jurisdiction, which is peculiar to himself, as Head of his Church?

And in Conformity to the Injunctions of Christ, and to the Practice as well as Precepts, of his very eminent Apostle, the Governours of the Christian Church, howsoever distressed, and wheresoever dispersed, have ever since the first Plantation of the Gospel, exerted their Powers both of Excommunication and Absolution; which makes it evident, that it was the Universal Sense of Christians in all Ages and Places, that Church Discipline is a Christian Ordinance, vested in Ecclesiastical Governours, whereunto obnoxious Offenders ought in Conscience to submit. And can it be imagined that the Church Catholick should all along continue in so gross a Errour, as to usurp those Powers, that cannot possibly be exercised without a palpable Invasion of Christ's Authority? And that they should thus invade such his Authority by his own

Commands.

Commands? This would represent our blessed Saviour as being *divided against himself*, and bringing his own Kingdom to Desolation.

It has been likewise the constant Practice of the Church of Christ, to make Laws for its own Benefit and Welfare, and to require Submission to those Laws, from its respective Members. This may be inferred from the numerous Canons of Councils, both *General* and *Local*, wherein several Things relating to Ecclesiastical Affairs, are enjoined and prohibited under such Penalties as the *Governours* of the Church thought fit to decree. This Power that has been always exercised, as well as claimed, is now by some thought to entrench upon Christ's Province, *who is the only Law-giver in his own Kingdom*. But it is here to be considered, that whatever is *discreetly* and *prudently* enacted by Synods and Councils in relation to the Church, is done, not in Contradiction to, but by virtue of the Authority of Christ himself. The *Charter* of Christianity authorizes Church-Officers to make *By-Laws* for the sake of Order, Decency, and Edification. And when such Officers enjoyn those Things only that are edifying, orderly, and decent, it may be justly affirmed, that they are far from violating, what may be called, the *Charter of Christianity*. It would seem very strange indeed to give them a *general Command to do all Things* in the Church of Christ, *decently; and in order*, and afterwards to blame them for making *particular Rules*, without which, Decency and Order could not be preserved. So that there is, no doubt, in Christ's Kingdom, not only an executive, but a *limited Legislative Power*, be'onging to Bishops, by virtue of those very Laws which Christ himself has

been pleased to enact. The Apostle then did not without sufficient Ground, assert, that *God has set in the Church, GOVERNMENTS, 1 Cor. xii. 28.*

Much more might be said in Defence of the Power of Church-Officers; but I shall hasten to say something in relation to the Authority of the Civil Magistrate, as to the Affairs of Religion. A Point that, to my great Surprize, as well as Sorrow, has lately met with unaccountable Opposition, evn from a Bishop of the soundest Branch of the Catholick Church.

'Tis here indeed to be granted, that the Magistrates Province is not to Minister in Sacred Things. Neither *Jewish*, nor Christian Princes were ever permitted to celebrate any religious Ordinance, which Function was peculiar to the Sons of *Aaron*, and to *those that are called of God*, as he was. *Saul's Presumption in offering a Burnt-Offering*, was not only sharply reproved, but very severely punished; as was King *Uzziah's* *Surpation of the Priest's Office*, in *burning Incense unto the Lord*. And it is judiciously declared by our own Church in Her 37th Article, that *we give not to our Princes, the ministring either of God's Word, or of the Sacrament; but that only Prerogative which we see to have been given always to all godly Princes in holy Scripture by God himself, that is, that they should rule all Estates and Degrees committed to their Charge by God, whether they be Ecclesiastical or Temporal; and restrain with the Civil Sword, all Stubborn and Evil Doers.*

What therefore belongs to, and is expected from Princes, as a Branch of their Regal Authority, is to make and execute wholesom Laws, for the regular Performance of Divine Worship, and for the Preservation of Religion as well from Corruption, as from Contempt. Accordingly

Josiah,

Josiah, Hezechiah, and Jehoshaphat, did in their Princely Capacity, give Orders and Directions about Sacred Affairs, without being esteemed either by the High Priests, or by those of the Second Order, Invaders of their Sacerdotal Powers. The Character *Samuel* himself gives of King *Saul*, is, that he was *Head of the Tribes of Israel* by God's own Unction ; and could he be Head of the Tribes of *Israel*, and not be Head of the Tribe of *Levi* too ? Now if he was Head of the Tribe of *Levi*, then that Tribe could not be exempt from his Supremacy and Jurisdiction. *The Courses of the Priests*, were soon afterwards actually appointed by King *David*; whose Son *Solomon* allotting them their respective Charges in the Service of God, we are expressly told, that *both the Priests and Levites departed not from his Commandment in any Matter*; which sufficiently shews that they concluded themselves under his Authority, not only in Civil, but in Ecclesiastical Matters.

From the Historical Part of the Old Testament, we are likewise abundantly assured, that as those Princes, who maintained Religion in its native Purity, and to that End encouraged the sincere and zealous Professors thereof, were remarkably commended and rewarded by God : So, on the other hand, those who discovered a quite contrary Principle, by introducing Idolatry, or not suppressing National Impieties, were reproved with a Severity suitable to their Demerits, and became generally signal Sufferers in their publick Character, as having in that Capacity been more aggravating Transgressors. Now, had it been the Duty of those Jewish Princes to have permitted their sinful, idolatrous Subjects to practise their own impious Schemes, and to let them

follow the Bent of their vile Prejudices, under Pretence of Conscience; with what Appearance either of Goodness or Justice, could God have rebuked or punished them, for not exerting their kingly Power in the Prevention, or Extirpation of Corruptions in Religion?

Princes are at least as much obliged as private Persons, to do all the Good they can in their respective Stations; being more befriended by that Being from whom cometh Promotion, and having far greater Opportunities of benefitting the World, than others have, it cannot be presumed that they are under no Obligation to secure Religion both from profane Insults, and from pernicious Interpretations. It must indeed be acceptable, when their Civil Administrations are tender and impartial; but when their Authority, which is it self Sacred, is exerted chiefly in Defence of *pure and undefiled Religion*, it must be a Spectacle peculiarly entertaining to the *Author and Finisher of our Faith*. 'Tis then that they discover in their Conduct such a sublime Mixture of Power and Piety, as makes them really answer the awful Character of God's Representatives, who governs indeed *all* the Affairs of this World, but whose Providence is principally concerned in the Success of his Church.

Whilst the Clergy are labouring in that Vineyard, the Civil Powers are to look to the Hedge, that no Gap may be unguarded, no Enemy may come and sow Tares, or pluck up by the Roots, what either *Paul hath planted*, or *Apollos watered*. Civil Magistrates are as *Cherubims* placed by God at the *Garden of spiritual Eden*, with the *flaming Sword of coercive Power*, which ought to be *turned every way to keep the way of the Tree of Life*; I mean, Religion, not from being *tasted*; but from being

being trampled upon. Church and State are so nearly ally'd to each other, that as among the Jews, the same Persons have been Kings and Prophets, so likewise among the *Heathens* the same individual Men have been both Kings and Priests; to give us to understand how much it is incumbent upon the Civil Magistrate to take Care of Religion.

The Evangelical Prophet foretelling the glorious State of the Christian Church under the Patronage and Conduct of Christian Princes, has this figurative Expression, (*Isaiah 49*) *Kings shall be thy nursing Fathers, and their Queens thy nursing Mothers.* Which Prophecy can import no less, than that Princes when converted from Infidelity, should act the Part of Parents, in taking Care of all their Christian Subjects, whom they should treat as their own Children, in rewarding and encouraging the Dutiful, and in correcting such as are Obstinate, and Irregular.

But how could Christian Princes be called nursing Fathers, or their Queens nursing Mothers, if their interposing their Authority in the Affairs of the Church, were a real Inconsistency with the Nature, or a real Prejudice to the Interest, of Christ's Kingdom? They could not with a safe Conscience, either reward, or rebuke, protect or punish; and so could not fulfil this Prophecy of *Isaiah*, without a sacrilegious Usurpation of our Saviour's Supremacy.

And yet, pursuant to this gracious and comfortable Prediction, in all Nations, as soon as Princes and Magistrates had imbraced the Christian Faith, Christianity had so far the Protection of the Civil Government, that the best and most godly Emperors and Rulers, thought themselves most obliged by virtue of their eminent Stations,

to make prudent Laws for the Establishment and Advantage of the true Religion : which to be sure they would have abhorred the very Thoughts of doing, could they have imagined such their Edicts, to have been any thing like an Encroachment upon the kingly Authority of our blessed Saviour.

I need not mention the Zeal of *Constantine*, of *Theodosius*, of *Justinian*, and of *Charles the Great*, who by *Edicts*, *Codes*, *Novels*, and *Capitulars*, have exerted their Supremacy in Ecclesiastical Affairs ; when I may refer to our own Princes that have with equal Zeal and Judgment, maintain'd this essential Branch of their Regal Authority. Before the Conquest, as well *Saxon*, as *Danish* Kings exercised their Sovereignty in this Particular. And when our Nation, by means of the Conquest, grew up into one intire Monarchy, our Princes were not wanting to assert their Claim to this Part of their Jurisdiction. We grant that too soon afterwards, in the dark Ages of Christianity, the Papal Usurpation interfered with, and dispossessed them of this their just Claim. But notwithstanding all the Power and Artifices of *Rome*, at the *Reformation* they happily regain'd, what they had antiently for a long time enjoy'd, as their proper Right ; and we have, blessed be God, ever since, setting aside the short Reign of *Queen Mary*, and the Confusions of the GREAT REBELLION, submitted to the Supremacy of our Princes in Matters Ecclesiastical, without supposing it any, the least, Prejudice to the Kingdom of Christ.

By the Laws and antient Customs of this Kingdom, our Princes interpose their Authority in Cases merely of an Ecclesiastical Nature. These may convene Synods, ratifie and confirm Canons;

nons; and upon Appeals, can determine Causes relating to spiritual Affairs, by their Court of Delegates. And they have it likewise in their Power, when Persons stand excommunicated Forty Days, and will not qualifie themselves for the Ordinance of *Absolution*, to issue out their *Writs* for apprehending, and laying them up without *Bail or Main-prise*, till such time as they shall dutifully submit themselves to the *Censures* of the Church. All which Proceedings would appear utterly unjustifiable and *Anti-Christian*, if in Matters of Religion, every one ought to be suffered to follow the Dictates of his own erroneous Conscience, and if there could be no Interpositions of this Nature, without breaking in upon the supremam Jurisdiction of our blessed Lord.

All that I have now to add, is, to exhort you my dear Brethren, to beware of all Doctrines that may create in you any the least disrespect to your Superiours either in Church or State. Be obedient to those that are in Authority, as well in Matters Ecclesiastical as Civil; which you cannot possibly do, if you are so unhappy as to imbrace this dangerous Position; That whatever Laws of an Ecclesiastical Nature are enacted, whatever Censures or Penalties are inflicted in order to inforce them, are all of them Encroachments upon the Authority of Christ. This will unguard, and if universally received, will without a Miracle, quite destroy the very Being of Christianity, out of a pretended Respect to its Sacred Author. By this Means, whilst we are saluting our Saviour with an *Hail Master*, we shall betray his Religion.

If the Apostles, who conversed with Christ, may be supposed to know his Will; and if the Primitive Bishops, who conversed with the Apostles, may be allowed to understand their Mind, the

Power

Power of binding and loosing, must be thought to stand upon a Divine Foot. But on the other hand, if the Right Reverend the Lord Bishop of BANGOR understands the Matter better than the Apostles, and not only the Primitive, but all other Bishops; since the first Plantation of the Gospel; you are then to look upon Excommunications, Absolutions, Benedictions, and Ecclesiastical Laws, together with their Sanctions, as so many unlawful Invasions of our Saviour's Supremacy.

We do not command what God has forbidden, neither do we presume to forbid what he has commanded. For instance, we do not enjoin superstitious Worship, nor do we countenance the *Doctrine of Devils*, forbidding to marry; which would be such an abuse of Trust in our Governors, as must have been interpreted a direct Opposition to the Supremacy of Christ. But since they enjoin what God himself has enjoined, and prohibit what he has prohibited; they do not abuse, but faithfully execute and discharge their great Trust, in commanding Things in their own Nature indifferent, that thereby they may become subservient to *Decency* and *Order*. And for any one to *insinuate* the contrary, can be no Argument of his Respect, either for our Church or State.

Now to God the Father, &c.



